

A
DISSERTATION
ON
NOTHING:
OR,
REMARKS on a LETTER
TO
WILLIAM PITT, Esq;



[Price One Shilling.]

THE

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Ex nihilo nihil fit.

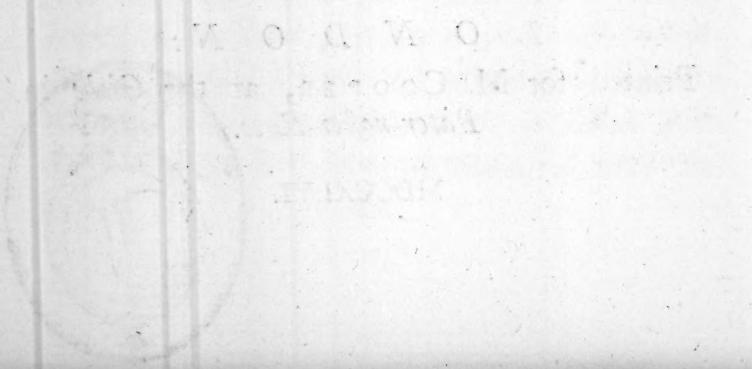
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A
DISSERTATION
ON
NOTHING, &c.

AS what we can neither see, nor know, is on one side to be guarded against, and on the other side encouraged, it is no wonder we come, at this time of day, when NOTHING occurs, to deal in paradoxical reasoning on what a disguised person tells us undisguisedly; being one of the few instances in which a mask is both
B useful

useful and honest; the party admonish'd seldom having his mind duly temper'd for reproof, when it comes from any other quarter: being apt to think his enemy has not seen cause for what he says, and to tell a confronted friend, that he ought to have overlook'd it.

Nevertheless, to make known as much of one's condition, as is necessary to keep another in utter ignorance, it may be affirm'd with the utmost truth, that alteration is not for the love of disputation, *otherwise I might have wrote something intelligible*, having followed the advice in my own country given to *Milton* in a foreign one; to speak much, and think little. I have long liv'd, and now wish to die unknown, *notwithstanding, as will appear hereafter, that I am a member of the house of Commons*; yet, *what is very strange*, with such a consciousness about me, as I flatter myself accompanies few human minds. I cannot, *tho' unknown to any one*, charge myself with ever having suffered my love or dislike of any man to make either a flatterer or slanderer of me: I praise warmly, but not lavishly; I censure coolly, but not insensibly. And all
men

men would do well to observe this rule, *if they can understand and follow it, these two rules*, lest their applause should become invidious, or their reflections grow unjust; in which cases we neither benefit the good, nor hurt the evil-doer; *a method which all wise and honest men should pursue, because it is the nearest thing imaginable to doing nothing.*

To give you some little estimation of my talents, I will venture to pronounce of myself, what one great man said to another, that though I am below a genius, *a talent very rarely acknowledg'd by us authors*, I am above the vulgar, *and as I said before, unknown to the world*, though honour'd with a seat in Parliament as well as you; *but whether in the house of ----- or ----- is immaterial, there being in both many as little known as myself.* I am a man of probity, *as is evident from my being unknown, or being in effect no-body, and no-body, you know, can't want probity; and therefore my senatorial capacity will help you very little to the knowledge of who I am, perhaps not at all; how should it? to bring your conjectures into any compass;* so I think your imagination can receive

no great aid or guidance from my acknowledging, that *I am no-body*, and one of the foremost of your admirers; because they also are too numerous for so particular a direction. *But that you may come near the mark, it being of the last consequence that I am known by you on this important occasion, I must inform you, that I took early notice of you, as one who was felt for by me, as the Cardinals feel for the Pope, which made me upon all occasions feel for you. In short I revers'd the common practice of thinking in this respect. I honour'd you, in short, as a virtuous man, and reverenc'd you as an able one---when as I should have reverenc'd your virtue, and honour'd your ability.*

To obviate any imputation or suspicion of vanity in what I have said, I beg leave to observe, that there is no breach of modesty in claiming *nothing*, if one's pride is no ways gratify'd in receiving it; and that mine cannot be gratified in my present situation, is *very* plain; because, if you should be dispos'd to grant whatever I could ask, it would be given in effect to a *phantom*.

I thought this preface *about nothing* necessary, in order to give it some title to your perusal, though it may have none to your consideration. And I will farther court and bribe your attention by a *very necessary* promise to be short, serious, and sincere -- *about nothing*.

Having, I hope, convinc'd you *and all the world*, that I have thus far said *nothing to the purpose*, it behoves me next to satisfy the noble *Lords*, who are parties in the cause now under consideration, of my unprejudic'd disposition; and I solemnly protest that I love some, honour others, *and that no-body, not a phantom on earth*, has less grudge or malevolence towards them than myself. Certain gentlemen indeed intimated that these regiments were tempting things; but as no proof can be brought of the efficiency of that temptation, charity bids us believe there was no such influence. You see, Sir, I am as ready to speak against my friends as my adversaries; to talk of them as things *respectable* was right, but to talk of them as you did in an house of commons, as things of *weight*, was wrong; *because what is respectable,*
ought

ought not to be consider'd as of any weight
in that house.

“ The reader, I doubt not, is wondering what all this can mean, little dreaming, that such tautology and nothingness are peculiar to great men, who acquire high applause by being thoroughly unintelligible; that by great application confound their narrow conceptions, and by much study labour themselves into super-eminent dullness. These are the men, ye Gods! whom happy *Britain* cherisheth in her bosom, whose understandings the great mob applaud, and the little ones cry up to to the skies, and who with geniuses as barren as the soil of *Blackbeath*, will, in spite of nature and their stars, write comments on Wit and Erudition.”

——— But see, agen
How solemn nonsense trickles from his pen.

With this singleness of heart, free alike from guile or gall, I will enter upon the matter; upon what matter, for heaven's sake, where, when, how? Why thus, and shall examine into your behaviour on the occasion,

occasion, with all the tenderness due to your modesty, with all the deference due to your abilities. I, perhaps, am of opinion you are not chang'd, others are not of that opinion. Your conduct has been loudly arraign'd, and bitterly inveigh'd against.

Have patience, gentle reader, you have as yet travelled through but seven pages to come at the matter; pray, Sir, to the point, if any point there be. It is urged, that though the spirit of party is subsided among us, the spirit of patriotism should remain. N. B. By party here is meant faction, and the English is, that as faction is dissipated, patriotism should reign in its stead: This is something to the purpose, well and so --- That notwithstanding our confidence in the ministers is extremely well founded, we are not to introduce a kind of political popery, by supposing them to be infallible, or that our faith is to be implicit. That a parliamentary watch and ward is to be kept up, ne quid detrimenti capiat respublica; and as few men are so well qualified as yourself, &c. These and such like observations, of equal importance, past between me and another friend of yours, during

during the most interesting part of the debate. What debate? well and what then? why I shall proceed now more directly to my purpose. *We are as yet but in the eighth page, and yet but coming to the purpose.* “ Courage, my boys, says the “ old pilot after a long voyage, I see land “ --Where? where? replies the impatient “ mariner. A-head, a-head, says the skipper. But how far off?--O ho, my boy, “ have patience, we shall be at it by and “ by.

“ I have now the pleasure of informing the reader, that *nothing* is vanishing apace, and that something almost worse than nothing begins to assume its place. You are to know, in order the better to understand, that there was an emulation in the house about a detraction in the same house, occasion’d by a projectation of some nobles of this nation, desiring to raise fifteen new regiments, which were to be under a certain regulation. That Mr. *Pitt* made a speech thereupon, and thereupon this wise gentleman writes to him as you have heard, and further saith as followeth, That, that ---

When

When the estimate of the charge of these fifteen regiments to be rais'd by the noble lords whose names accompanied it, was laid before the committee of supplies, in order to have their resolutions upon it, *as no doubt was the true reason*; I believe some gentlemen were irreconcilably averse to the whole project. Possibly there might be as many more who wish'd to see it take effect. *From whence we may conclude that it was possible to believe, that the pro's and con's were pretty near equal.* Well, Sir, *your inference.* Why; that the more moderate, to my great astonishment, who were also more numerous, were for it, who foreseeing that inconvenience would attend either extreme, look'd for truth in the middle way.

“Your astonishment then, Sir, seems to
 “arise, from seeing a number of members
 “in that house, with temper and moderation, searching after truth: which is
 “a compliment from a brother member,
 “that would call for our regard, were
 “we not previously informed, that although you are a member, yet that
 “you are unknown there, and as being

“ unknown can’t expect our thanks. ”
 The explanation does equal honour to those noble peers, whom the committee thought it would be ill advised entirely to disappoint in their zeal, or to forego the benefit of it: *Now here is zeal and benefit*, but not to be purchased too dearly, by incurring dangers and evils to which it was not adequate. *Thus zeal and benefit appears to justify. And if the dangers and evils opposed to them appear, we shall see where the scale kicks the beam.* The committee seem’d to be of opinion, that the fervour of his Majesty’s gratitude had trespassed a little on his reason, upon the first overture made to him by these worthy champions of their country, and made him overlook the inconveniencies arising from too implicit a compliance with them.

“ Here is another point introduced to
 “ shew, if to shew any thing, that dan-
 “ gers and evils are but inconveniencies,
 “ and that his Majesty’s reason was there-
 “ fore buried in his fervour ; now as evils
 “ are reduced to inconveniencies so soon,
 “ it is to be hop’d that they will, in the
 “ course of these wise remarks, be prov’d
 “ by the same hand to be neither, and then
 “ his

“ his Majesty’s reason will come to life
 “ again, and his injudicious fervour va-
 “ nish. Thus we reason ! ” —

They saw the difficulty in which he had involv’d himself and us, and could devise no other expedient to extricate both, than by beseeching him in an humble address to moderate and qualify the extraordinary concessions made to these great and honourable persons, by revoking the article of rank.

“ Thus, after travelling through ten
 “ heavy pages, we are come to one of
 “ the points in question, which is, I sup-
 “ pose, that there was a dispute in the
 “ house, whether the officers in the new
 “ rais’d regiments should have rank, which,
 “ to my apprehension, seems an idle or
 “ an improper question, since his Ma-
 “ jesty’s commission implies rank of
 “ course ; and temporary commissions
 “ in regular regiments were never yet
 “ heard of: the colonels were of the no-
 “ bility, who, by custom immemorial,
 “ have been always allowed rank both in
 “ the army and navy, without the regular
 “ steps

“ steps leading thereto ; that is to say,
 “ they have at all times jump’d over the
 “ commoners heads, if the Sovereign
 “ thought proper, and is what I never yet
 “ heard complain’d of. As to the officers
 “ under them, the question should have
 “ been, whether it was not better, and
 “ more likely to answer the end, to first
 “ promote the officers in half-pay, be-
 “ cause they best understood how to disci-
 “ pline new-rai’d troops, and because it
 “ would save expence to the nation.

“ This was a very reasonable ground
 “ for an address, and whereof the house
 “ have peculiar cognizance, because that
 “ the money of the people was concern’d
 “ in the consequence : but whether they
 “ should have rank or not, is in no sense
 “ a proper question, because if the regi-
 “ ments were voted, rank followed of
 “ course ; and to have address’d the Sove-
 “ reign on that point, is as absurd and un-
 “ parliamentary as if the Sovereign had
 “ directed the commons in their votes of
 “ supplies, which no body presumes he
 “ has power to do, by the rules of our
 “ constitution. Therefore Mr. *Pitt*, in
 “ opposing such an address, only shew’d
 “ that

“ that he understood the constitution, and
 “ that it was as much the business of a
 “ member of that house to support the
 “ King’s prerogative as their own, because
 “ thereupon depends the preservation of
 “ that equilibrium which is the support of
 “ the constitution.

“ After this, what the grave writer be-
 “ fore me observes, of his party propos-
 “ ing things in an unparliamentary man-
 “ ner, and falling into confusion, is not
 “ in the least wonderful ; How could it
 “ be otherwise ? When the question, the
 “ basis on which they built, was unpar-
 “ liamentary, all their proceedings there-
 “ on must necessarily be confused and
 “ wrong.—Though this gentleman is
 “ pleased to say, *that the reasonableness of*
 “ *the motion was scarce questioned*, p. 19.
 “ But the private reason of a man’s mind
 “ as to the thing, and the propriety of
 “ the motion in that place, are two dif-
 “ ferent things.—This gentleman says,
 “ *that the impropriety was only spoke to as*
 “ *it regarded the royal word*. What might
 “ be spoke to I can’t well remember,
 “ but the impropriety was very clear in a
 “ much

“ much stronger sense, as is intimated
 “ above, and consequently all the gentle-
 “ man’s wise remarks made thereon in
 “ pag. 10. are deductions from a false
 “ principle, and only shew, that this
 “ gentleman understands our constitution
 “ just as well without doors as he did
 “ within, which may probably be the
 “ reason why, as he says before, he
 “ is totally unknown, and I dare say will
 “ ever be so, unless he takes pains to be
 “ better instructed.

“ The conclusion drawn from all this is
 “ of a piece with the premisses, viz. *that*
 “ *the house being free in their votes occa-*
 “ *sion’d by a schism in the ministerial clan,*
 “ *which made Mr. Pitt’s apostacy so very*
 “ *unseasonable.* Which is the same thing
 “ as to say in other words, that his not
 “ giving up his sense and reason, his judg-
 “ ment and understanding, to the absur-
 “ dities of a faction, who, according to
 “ this writer’s own account, propos’d they
 “ knew not what, was an unseasonable
 “ apostacy. And would he not have said
 “ the same, if Mr. Pitt had been at the
 “ last independent meeting at *Vintner’s-*
 “ *ball*, and refus’d pledging some of the
 silly

“ silly healths, not to say worse of them,
 “ proposed there. It is part of the political
 “ creed of these men, that all who
 “ vote with them in what’s right, must
 “ also do so in what’s wrong; they must
 “ go through thick and thin, sense and
 “ nonsense, or be branded as apostates.

“ This, the wise writer says, *p. 12. was*
 “ *matter of infinite speculation, and as he con-*
 “ *fesses himself, extremely difficult of solution:*
 “ yet has found it out by observing, that,
 the standing in a gap at a critical juncture
 is undoubtedly a great enhancement of the
 merit of so good an office, *pag. 12.* This
 “ would have been a very good observa-
 “ tion, unattended with the *ifs* and *doubts*
 “ that are annex’d to the tail of it, *pag. 13.*
 “ and illustrated with scraps from scrip-
 “ ture, which is here for the first time
 “ turn’d into a witticism, just as much to
 “ the purpose as the first eight pages.
 “ And here the reader is to learn, that we
 “ have got through the first disquisition,
 “ and consequently that it brings us to
 “ the second, which surprised this wise
 “ *unknown* beyond expression. He said
 “ and she said many things on the oc-
 “ casion, the result was, that *rank would*
 “ *carry*

“ *carry it.* How natural this was, ap-
 “ pears from the skill certain persons have
 “ in *Arithmancy*, which is the art of
 “ foretelling events by *numbers*. But
 “ a certain gentleman of the law told
 “ them, they were disputing about no-
 “ thing: he said, *factum valet*, the thing
 “ was done by him who had a proper
 “ right to do it; that a commission, and
 “ rank, were blended together, and could
 “ no more be separated than the sun and
 “ his light; which, he says, was a notable
 “ discovery, after three hundred of the
 “ most considerable men in this country
 “ had been deliberating upon it for *seven*
 “ *hours*. But now suppose that three
 “ thousand of the best men in the king-
 “ dom had been deliberating upon it for
 “ seven years, will it prove it the less ab-
 “ surd, since every one of them knew or
 “ ought to have known that what this
 “ lawyer said was true and constitutional,
 “ which I am sorry to say was not the case
 “ on the other side.

“ That the King could raise these regi-
 “ ments, and give the officers commis-
 “ sions, and as a natural appendage, rank,
 “ by virtue of his royal prerogative is out
 “ of

“ of doubt; that the house might have
 “ address’d the King not to have rais’d
 “ them, is equally out of doubt, and
 “ have prevented it too, if they pleased,
 “ by not supplying money for that pur-
 “ pose. But after all this consented to,
 “ they could be only men of very peculiar
 “ heads, who dream’d of separating the
 “ rank from the commissions. It would
 “ have been as if the lords had address’d
 “ the King, that the person he honour’d
 “ with a barony might not sit in their
 “ house. From whence may we not fairly
 “ conclude, that what this gentleman calls
 “ apostacy in Mr. *Pitt*, was nothing more
 “ than that he opposed an absurdity? But
 “ let us now see what strange stuff fol-
 “ lows.

Page 15--The opening this new battery
 against us, which had been *mask’d* the day
 before, was thought by some a little un-
 fair. But precipitancy, oversights, or for-
 ced compliances in business, will reduce
 men to shifts, who in other circumstances
 would despise and abhor any thing like
 chicane or subterfuge. However, Sir, we
 shall find upon examining decisively, as
 this *plea* was *urg’d* and *utter’d*, that it de-

D

serv’d

serv'd but little attention. Was any thing or could any thing be done in this matter without the advice and consent of Parliament? if not, his Majesty's promise was no ways binding.

“ I shall here leave reciting verbatim,
 “ and only give the sense of the two following pages, having by the above recital shewn, that words, sense and argument are not always compatible ---
 “ The commissions given before such assent, he says, were but waste paper, that
 “ the crown might have altered them,
 “ and made new ones with limitation ;”
 and no-body could doubt, but that the nobles would have accepted them, otherwise it would have been a virtual confession, that there were mix'd motives in their undertakings ; a considerable drawback on that heroic virtue and public spirit which induc'd the King and Parliament to listen to their proposals. To p. 17--

“ The sense of all which nonsense, rather to be conceived than understood,
 “ seems to be, that somebody was precipitated, overseen, or forced into a compliance, to do what in other circumstances
 “ stances

“ stances he would have abhorr’d. How-
 “ ever it will be found, that the decisive
 “ plea, as it was examin’d, *urg’d*, and
 “ *utter’d*, signified but little without the
 “ consent of Parliament, and without that
 “ his Majesty’s promise no way binding --
 “ and therefore the commissions given by
 “ him but waste paper.

“ It is morally impossible for any crea-
 “ ture breathing, but one whose ideas
 “ were buried in the confusion of his
 “ verbosity, to have said so little in three
 “ pages ; abstracting can hardly render
 “ them intelligible. There is certainly
 “ something, some meaning at the bot-
 “ tom, though so clouded and obscur’d,
 “ that renders it more difficult to come
 “ at, than a silver penny under the foun-
 “ dation of the Royal Exchange. I there-
 “ fore conclude that he would have said,
 “ that nothing but the necessity of our
 “ affairs could have engag’d either his
 “ Majesty or the Parliament to have con-
 “ sented to the offer made by these no-
 “ blemen, nor any thing else have en-
 “ gag’d Mr. *Pitt* to act as an advocate in
 “ the affair ; which are facts I dare say
 “ no-body will dispute with him. This

“ appears as plain as any thing 'tis possible
 “ for a man to say, who has been accus-
 “ tom'd to tautology and jargon, who has
 “ just genius enough to know himself lost
 “ in a wood, and entangling himself far-
 “ ther by endeavouring to get out of it ;
 “ so by way of explanation proceeds to
 “ shew, That, that, that ---

Page 17, 18--All I have hitherto said,
 was with a design to shew, how there
 came to be such a disposition among us,
 to countenance a scheme not altogether
 reconcileable to our reason and conscien-
 ces, in order to reflect some reproach upon
 the authors and abettors of it, who, in-
 stead of requiting our complaisance with a
 concession, to which we had a double
 claim, took advantage of our candour,
 and made it accessary to our defeat.

“ The interpretation of this explanation
 “ in plain English is, that we were dis-
 “ pos'd to countenance this scheme against
 “ both our reason and conscience, in or-
 “ der to reflect some reproach upon its
 “ abettors, who, instead of acting by the
 “ same bad disposition, were so uncom-
 “ plaisant as to oppose and defeat us.

“ I

“ I have heard it said, that in law
 “ cases more causes were lost by blunder-
 “ ing advocates, than gain’d by the recti-
 “ tude of claims. The affair before us
 “ is a kind of law-suit ; how far a just
 “ one, on this writer’s side, not to be de-
 “ termin’d by any thing he pleads. It is
 “ blunder’d and tortur’d out of its senses.
 “ The reasoning on it is the very mirrour
 “ of a sham plea ; it is *vox & preterea*
 “ *nihil* ; this, that, any thing, and nothing
 “ at all : it is the very essence of contra-
 “ diction, and soul of nonsense ; and did
 “ not one see the collegian in every line,
 “ it would be impossible to conclude, but
 “ that he was writing booty, and aiming
 “ to expose the side he would seem to
 “ take, instead of the opposite. To prove
 “ this is still to follow him ; thus --

Page 18, 19, 20--The Parliament should
 have been appriz’d of the stumbling-block,
 that they might know that they were
 circumscrib’d ; they would then have re-
 turn’d it to the ministers to new frame,
 who should have been directed to have
 given it us thus, *viz.* That his Majesty
 had receiv’d very generous propofals, men-
 tioning

tioning from whom, for the raising of fifteen new regiments *gratis*, for the defence of the nation during its calamitous circumstances, and desires to know whether we will advise him to accept the proposal? To which we should have return'd a short answer in the negative.

“ This is the plain sense of three pages,
 “ and shews at once, in a very clear light,
 “ the sense and spirit of a faction, who
 “ are bold enough to declare, that they
 “ would have given the negative to a pro-
 “ posal, on the face of this writer's own
 “ stating, apparently for the public ser-
 “ vice, and tending to our preservation
 “ from popery and slavery; which, at
 “ this delicate crisis, has something in it
 “ very new and extraordinary; equally
 “ expressing the lenity of our government,
 “ and the rectitude of Mr. *Pitt's* mea-
 “ sures, in getting fairly out of such com-
 “ pany. Every day gives us new light
 “ into the views and designs of this des-
 “ perate and despairing faction, who, ra-
 “ ther than not shew their malice, which
 “ they are too full of to contain within
 “ even decent bounds, blunder into every
 “ excess, and lose themselves in the gulph
 “ of

“ of their own folly and madness. It is
 “ in pursuance of these bad, or rather mad
 “ principles, that it is said in p. 20. *That*
 “ *it was a pernicious project, and the conse-*
 “ *quences of the votes thereupon fearful ob-*
 “ *jects.*”

Had this gentleman been a well-wisher to the commonwealth, the case of the fifteen new regiments had been set in quite another light; he would never have own'd their necessity, and oppos'd their being; he would have endeavour'd only, that they should have been established on a right footing, not impeded their existence. He owns their necessity, and at the same time absolutely opposes them, by cutting off all the means that could give them being. He means by this, that the necessity was the cause of opposition. The army was not before half complete, the rebels were entering the kingdom, and therefore to raise recruits in any shape, wrong, because it might impede the pretender's march to *London*. Herein consists the *pernicious project*, and hence arises the *fearful objects* presented before us; it not otherwise appearing from aught he has hitherto said, why it was pernicious,
 or

or what these fearful objects are. Though it may appear presently, that this self-contradiction, this public, unknown, reason'd upon, and reply'd to Mr. *Pitt*, and shews, that in his replies he consider'd Mr. *Pitt* as an *unity*, because he acted in union with some learned friend, which I suppose might be him, who said *factum valet*, see p. 21. This considering of a man as an unity, because that he acts in concert with another, is as new as unintelligible; has in it all the signatures of school gibberish, and therefore worthy of the party whose illustrious advocate he is.

After all, would it not make a Stoic laugh, to see a man in the narrow limits of a very short twelve-penny pamphlet--in almost every page, first laying snares for himself, and then endeavouring to get out of them again, by such pitiful conceits and contrivances, as can only contribute to render him eminently ridiculous. He must premise, before he says any thing more, *that whatever he may say against the regiments, it should give no umbrage to their commanders, because they engag'd on laudable and virtuous motives; they join'd*
the

the patriot to the courtier, and public spirit and affection to their prince went hand in hand; nevertheless he fears this fatal measure will come under the description Adam gives of Eve, when he calls her a specious mischief, an accomplish'd snare, p. 22, 23.

What, in the name of nonsense, is all this? Does he mean, that virtuous motives, patriotism, and public spirit, with affection to their prince, brings them and their measures under this silly description, produc'd out of the Lord knows what, and inserted here to prove, that the instant this writer got his neck out of the snare, he put it in again. This wise remark is followed by a train of *ifs* and *ands* set off with inconclusive presumption of one knows not what, nor why, and so ends the 20th line of the 23d page. *For which he will make no apology, because he has taken into it the very essence of the controversy; from whence we may fairly conclude, that this controversy has the happiness of being without essence; and so we will begin again where we left off, ten pages past, and leave the essence to those that can tell where to find it; and*

E

so,

so, as they say in the army, return again to our rank.

I need not here inform my reader, that we have been hitherto talking about *nothing*, or what is as like it as any thing can be. We are now to hear what I said and you said about rank --- which, if it proves nothing more, it probably will, that somebody is a rank Jacobite, and not one of the wisest of the party neither.

The point we are at length come to, is not whether the giving rank to these regiments be wrong, but whether the officers in the other regiments would not be angry about it, neglect their country's service, and become enemies to the state? This is a question indeed. I have observ'd before, that the nobility have always a right, in a more particular manner, to rise irregularly than other people, because they are, by virtue of their peerage, born to superior rank, have a share in the legislature, and can't, in that light, accept of inferior stations. The officers under them in new-raisd regiments, hurt not those who were in the old; because if the new ones had
not

not existed, the old ones could not have been benefited, nor can be hurt by their being rais'd. If the officers had been taken out of the old, and advanc'd in the new, the old must have had new officers, the addition would have been the same, and opportunities of rising not lessen'd, but increas'd in proportion to the number of new regiments rais'd.

Well then, it seems at last this is not the point neither; *for can any body suppose, that the great council of the nation was to be aw'd or influenc'd in its resolutions by the most considerable body of men among us; which I hope the army will never be; tho' God only knows.* What is it here that God only knows? Whether the army will be the most considerable body of men among us? Who in their senses can ever doubt it? when all the pains in the world is taken to make them so, by the very people who pretend the direct contrary; that first cry out against a standing army at home, and vote for their going abroad, then vote against, rail and scold at those who sent them; then in a great hurry and fright, vote them home again, and hug them in their bosoms; then vote for fifteen new

E 2

regi-

regiments, and then vote they may be no regiments at all, *by remonstrating against the wrong done thereby to the veterans, which made them feel the discontent they did not fear, or if they fear'd, that apprehension had but a second place in their minds,*
 P. 25.

The two following pages are made up of the like matter ; a kind of new sense made up out of *nothing*, meaning *nothing*, and at last concluding in page 28, that soldiers are not insensible more than other men, no more than Mr. *Pitt* himself, and that less considerable causes have produc'd the effect we apprehend. *In Sweden, for instance, not many years ago, an entire army was near revolting on account of the unsavouriness of their bread, and with a prince at the head of it, very near as well belov'd as our BILLY.* The conclusion, I suppose, may be, that as the *Swedes* army had like to have revolted by having unsavoury bread, so the *British* army may revolt, because there is fifteen new regiments added to them : a parallel, I dare say, that is not to be parallel'd by any writer between *Grub-street* and *St. Giles's pound* ; and however Mr. *Pope* may have deceiv'd the
 world

world in giving us another name, he certainly meant you, when he said --*none but himself can be his parallel.*

This brings, or rather drags us to page 39, where the variety of matter that might be taken into the dispute, is wav'd, and the simplicity of saying *nothing* exerted in its full force and vigour, in order to render truth more easy of perception --- The supporting of a wrong thing by example, and the pleading want of precedent, in order to reject a right one, affording great scope for raillery ; but being apt to look on such occurrences, as the peculiar infelicities of this country, the subject becomes again too serious, and you conform to it accordingly. Thus english'd, there is matter enough, but the simplicity of saying *nothing* rendering truth more easy of perception, I therefore chuse to shew you your error by saying *nothing* to the *purpose*, which, with the supporting of a wrong thing by *example*, and rejecting a right one for want of *precedent*, affords great scope for raillery, which being an unhappy occurrence, I shall become serious again.

I conceive this honest gentleman had at this time in his head some vague idea of a saying of Lord *Burleigh's*, retir'd from business and the world, when people affected to be awkwardly merry, would cry be serious, as if he had said, Sir, mirth is not your talent. The two reasons of this odd kind of writing are either a hurry of imagination or consummate dullness, the one makes a man jumble inconsistent ideas together, the other makes him appear to have none at all; so he runs from one thing to another, finishes nothing, begins without a beginning, and ends without end, like a conjurer traversing a circle. He is sometimes at a stand, but never comes to a point. Now he conforms to be serious; that is, to say something to the point. No! he has something else to say first: What then? why something else? So, and what then? why then he begins again. In this case, although it may be presum'd he is but one, or as himself phrases it, an *unity*; yet he seems to represent many hares in a field, who starting at different times, and crossing each others tracks, puzzle the hunters scent, and confound the chace.

He

He could now trouble us with another instance, with a recapitulation of the arguments used by a sensible and worthy friend of his, by taking notice, that as the prerogative had been in some sort way'd, by giving a power to the noble lords to appoint their own officers, and all military law and discipline suspended by allowing them to covenant for local service only, &c. you should have said temporary too, but chuses rather to keep to his own method of treating this arduous question, p. 29, 30.

This seems to be the most wise part of the whole affair. The saying *nothing* about what he does say, is not new; but of what significance it can be to any other part of the army, that this is but local, I can't imagine; rank can stand the officers in no stead, whose commissions are local, and their service temporary, it being evident, that should they be order'd abroad, and refuse to go after the rebellion is over, that their commissions and rank will cease together; it not being presum'd, that in such case they will have half-pay; it follows, that their rank is temporary by their
own

own agreement ; and is given for the time to establish and preserve military law and discipline, which otherwise could not be done without a special act of parliament, to make local and temporary commissions of equal efficacy with general ones ; but in this case we are arguing about what this gentleman will not have to be any part of his argument, and therefore must come to the *arduous question*, when we can tell where to find it.

But since he has mention'd it again, he desires to ask, what insinuation or stigma it carried with it? What? why the *arduous question*. What is this question? Have patience a little. He has reminded himself of that article in their agreement, by which it is stipulated, that these regiments are not to go abroad ; and can't help observing, that if they should be establish'd—which the whole nation is hourly deprecating—it is a great aggravation of the injury done the old ones, because it is the duty of the youngest to go first. *Pag.*
31.

Now if this be the *arduous question*, it is soon answer'd, that if they become establish'd

blish'd, their agreement is at an end—And so it will be if they are not establish'd when the rebellion ceases.—In the first case they will be bound by the same rules as any other part of the army, in the other will be no part of the army.

But to this, says he, add, “ that the
 “ same interest and influence by which
 “ the noble lords have obtain'd these
 “ bounties and indulgencies for them-
 “ selves, will be perpetually exerting itself
 “ in favour of such subalterns, to the
 “ further mortification and dishonour of
 “ their elders, whose heads they will be
 “ put over, &c. Repeated wrongs of
 “ this sort will make these noble colo-
 “ nels to be look'd upon with such invi-
 “ dious eyes by the army, that when they
 “ come to be employ'd, those who are
 “ to co-operate with them, will be doing
 “ all they can to render their best services
 “ ineffectual, &c. *pag. 32.*

If this gentleman had known any thing of the army, he would have been apprisd, that preferments there are not usually the work of either merit or interest; that those who have money buy of the colo-

nels, and that those who have none remain as they were; and that if even interest could banish this practice, it might possibly be of some service to the army, if merit, more. It follows from hence, that if there be any danger of subalterns rising through the interest of their colonels, which must be in consequence of their merit, at least in the eyes of these colonels, then this change is plainly for the better, this new establishment superior to the old one, as it will be an encouragement to young officers to exert themselves in the service of their country, which may not, on the old establishment, be quite so much the case: so that this, instead of depreciating the new, inhances their value, and would make us wish them to be continued. And then the great fear will be, that such colonels will not for that very reason be continued, whatever their regiments may be; then our argument comes to nothing, for so soon as the old colonels come in it is lost; by which means we shall be in the same happy way as before, which I humbly presume may be the point aim'd at by this *arduous question*.

If

If this be not the point, I am afraid we shall never get at it. We are now in the 33d page, equally tired of saying nothing. My adversary cries out first, and says he fears it; but I am really in earnest, and am sure of it, and hardly cheered with his assurance that we are drawing to a conclusion. That is to say, if a punctilious exactness in all his dealings, did not intimate to him, that his title-page promised what he has not perform'd; which is a punctilio I can't pretend to, having fully perform'd all I promised by my title-page, and am only afraid that I have been guilty of some works of supererogation; and for that reason, according to the paradoxical way of reasoning we set out with, I shall still follow the chase, in clear and evident hopes of catching *nothing*.

The gentleman here begs leave to make good his title-page by another interrogatory; by asking, what you Mr. *Pitt* could mean, by attributing such abundant merit to those great people *for standing in the gap*, as you called it? I must beg leave here to give the reader notice, that the gentle-

man intends to be witty on the word *gap*. Thus, their merit was but upon an equality with all the rest of the people, who testified in their several ways, that they were ready to sacrifice all that was dear to them in the defence of their religion and liberties, and the present happy establishment. But how, Sir, did they stand in the gap? I suppose you meant their names, which if equal to any fifteen battalions of the King's troops, as you affirmed, are much better things than the regiments; for at the time we were canvassing this matter, there were such *gaps* in the regiments themselves, as the whole force of the enemy might have pass'd through without giving or receiving any annoyance. *The English of which wit is,*
 “ that before the regiments were com-
 “ pleted, they were incomplete; the
 “ important point aim'd at by this further
 “ interrogatory.”

Now we have done with *gap*, the monosyllable *raw* assumed its place, and is to be the object of a new witticism, though it be a little *foreign* to the argument, in which I presume the gentleman may be mistaken, the argument not being of a
 nature

nature capable either to be conceived or understood, therefore nothing of the same nature can be foreign to it.

The reason why it is foreign to the argument is, that it naturally leads him to observe upon the expediency and fruitlessness of the whole project, since for half the time of their supposed duration they could not be compleat; and when they were, it was hoped the reasons for their being rais'd would have no longer subsisted, having been told that new troops under experienced officers make but *raw* work of it, but *raw* troops led by *raw* officers would not make very *raw* work, pag. 34, 35.

Thus you see, courteous reader, what we wits can do, when we deign to move the quill. Two little monosyllables gorg'd with the waters of Helicon, swell themselves into mountains that vye with Parnassus. But let us do as we were doing at the beginning, hasten towards the end, and leave these *raw gaps* with the dust they have rais'd, to furnish out a page for the *poeticæ minores*. " And, in fine, wish,
" for the sake of the noble lords, that our
" motion

“ motion had been comply’d with, which
 “ would have stopt at once the mouths
 “ of envy and detraction, as many of
 “ them then as might be inclin’d here-
 “ after to resume the military calling,
 “ would have brought claims to his Ma-
 “ jesty, strongly inforced by the merit of
 “ their past disinterested services; for I
 “ own, Sir, they may be the properest
 “ persons to give regiments to, but the
 “ worst to get regiments from. This
 “ consideration chiefly has made the mea-
 “ sure look’d upon with such invidious
 “ eyes; and it is certain that none could
 “ be more conducive to the enlarging and
 “ establishing of a standing force in this
 “ country, and finding the thing unpo-
 “ pular, will be sufficient to make them
 “ wish it undone, *p.* 36.

“ Thus, Sir, I have gone through the
 “ unprofitable task, which was, to tell
 “ you, that *sibi constans* and *propositi tenax*
 “ were the greatest and most venerable
 “ characteristics belonging to men. Not that
 “ any body can fairly offer the shadow of
 “ an objection to your embarking with
 “ any sett of men, for virtue knows no
 “ party; but if she should be reduced to
 “ the

“ the necessity of forming one for herself,
 “ I fear the corps would be like the other
 “ independent companies, equally feeble,
 “ equally incomplete. If you have been
 “ only flirting with *fame* and *virtue*, you
 “ have profaned the shrine of one, and
 “ shut the ears of the other to all future
 “ solicitations. But it is not so ; you
 “ must have been in earnest, for to be sin-
 “ cere, is the distinguishing quality of a
 “ great mind : other virtues are occasion-
 “ ally exerted only, &c. In this persua-
 “ sion and confidence, I will dismiss you
 “ with a compliment made to me (very
 “ undeservedly) at the university, by the
 “ governor of the college I was of, upon
 “ reading the first exercise I ever put into
 “ his hands, *and being so much to my ho-
 “ nour sticks fast to my heart, never to be
 “ forgotten.*

*Perge ut incepisti, & decus sis, non ædis
 nostræ tantum, sed totius academici In-
 genio præditus es omnibus rebus pari,
 omnia expectabimus.*

The beauty of writing consists in justness
 of thought, delicacy of stile, and such a
 happy clearness of expression, as that the
 matter

matter in question, and the reasonings upon it, may be easily comprehended and contained; which will always be the case, when the thought is regularly pursued, free from breaks, *gaps*, and interruptions, which in effect turn sense into nonsense, by an absence of connection, creating a thorough unintelligibleness.

If this, or some such like rule had been given this gentleman on his first exercise at college, in lieu of the above compliment, in English instead of Latin, and had been as well preserv'd in his mind, it then perhaps might have been said of him here, as it seems to have been there prophesied, not in the house of commons, but in the house of lords also.

Ingenio præditus es omnibus rebus pari.

Our first setting out was plainly with an intent to say something about a speech made by one Mr. *Pitt* in the house of Commons, that concern'd a motion for an address in the same house; the intention whereof seems to have been to desire his Majesty not to give the fifteen new regiments rank, but only to give them such
limited

limited commissions, as might expire on the determination of a certain term; but his Majesty's *fervour* getting the better of his *judgment*, and Mr. *Pitt's reason* the better of some *private engagements*, he, the said Mr. *Pitt*, and his said *Majesty*, combining and confederating to and with certain persons, who had the honour, safety, and welfare of the state at heart, did oppose this same address, and in such a manner, as to render the same fruitless; whereby it happened, that rank took place, and such a *gap* was made in the said regiments, as the whole army of the rebels might conveniently march through, and come up to *London*; by which said actings and doings it was fear'd, that such regiments, with such officers, would *not* make *raw* work of it; that thereupon arose the *arduous question*, and thence various interrogatories, which tended generally to remind Mr. *Pitt*, that *sibi constans* and *propositi tenax*, were the greatest and most venerable characteristics among men. That virtue has no party, and if should be oblig'd to form one, the fear is, that it would be like the other independent companies, equally feeble and incomplete; and in a persuasion that Mr. *Pitt* is a man

of virtue, though an apostate from his engagements, we dismiss him with the compliment made to us by the governor of a college, on producing our first exercise, *Perge ut incepisti, &c.*

The reader will please to observe upon the whole, that this pamphlet was either wrote for the public, or it was not; if wrote for the public, the basis whereon the argument is intended to be establish'd, *viz.* the *speech* and the *motion*, is not here; so that the building which should be erected thereon, is suspended in the air, like a witch on a broom-staff, it has no foundation, is constructed in the clouds; and the only propriety upon the whole is the finishing it with an airy compliment; so that something being hinted, many things *urg'd* and *utter'd*, and in effect nothing said, or perhaps meant to be said, the reader is to conjure out the meaning as well as he can.

On the other side, if it was not intended for the public, then the reason of its being unintelligible to them is obvious, *viz.* because it was never design'd, that they should understand it. But then this
leaves

leaves us at a loss, why it was printed, publish'd, and set to sale. To investigate this, the public are to understand, that when a man, who answers and harangues in the house, is neither known in the house, nor out of the house, that they ought to conceive him *a being* superior to man, an inhabitant of his own suspended structure, one whose paradoxical reasoning is too light, airy, and spiritual for human conception; and from thence conclude, that it was not printed and publish'd for men to read and understand, but like the phenomena's in the heavens, to gaze at and admire. And thus being wrote to set the public right in one of the most important passages of the year, there is nothing more evident than the necessity of its being perfectly unintelligible.

From all which Mr. *Pitt* is to learn, that he ought not to say any thing in the house for the future, that is too high for his adversary's understanding, nor to enter upon any matter too big for their conceptions, lest he should lead them again into such a scene of conceits and paradoxes, as not only bewilders them in the maze of their own imaginations, but likewise

wife seduces the public into infinite puzzle and perplexity.

I have only left to beg leave, in the place of Mr. *Pitt*, to return this extraordinary author his compliment, being the same which was paid me by a good old woman in the country, occasion'd by a long dispute about nothing. She in the person of the Deity in a whirlwind, as it appears in the xxxviiith chapter of *Job*, verse 2^d, thus deliver'd herself :

Who is this that darkneth counsel by words without knowledge?

F I N I S.